(d) A reliable estimate of forest area that has been degraded is not available. Sattelite imagery for the period 1980-82 shows that forest cover in the country is 46.35 million ha.

(e) The following are some of the important steps taken by the Government to check illicit felling of trees :—

(1) Strict enforcement of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and of various other enactments to prevent unauthorised felling of trees.

(2) Elimination of the agency of contractors in the working of forests in most of the states.

(3) Creation offuelwood reserves by undertaking massive tree plantations within and outside the forest areas.

(4) Taking up of intensive studies of the problems of grazing encroachment and shifting cultivation with a view to find long term solutions.

Request of Andhra Pradesh for Atomic Power Plant

*259. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY :
SHRI T. CHANDRASEKHAR REDDY :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has demanded the location of an atomic power plant near Nagarjunasagar ;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal ; and

(c) what action the Central Government are taking in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Site Selection Committee of the Department of Atomic Energy has examined various sites including Nagarjunasagar, to assess their suitability for setting up atomic power stations in the Southern Region. The report of the committee is under consideration of the Government.

Encouragement to Sikhs to join the Canadian armed forces

t26o. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are. aware of the encouragement being given by Canada to the Sikhs to join its armed forces and the recent addn ss delivered by a Canadian recruiting officer at a meeting of the World Sikh Organisation in Toronto to moti vate the potential recruits and which was largely attended by proponents of Khalistan ; anrl

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government of India in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT) : (a) The Government of India is aware of a recruiting officer of the Canadian Armed Forces having attended a meeting arranged by the World Sikh Organisation, on 3rd November, 1985 at The Dixie Road Gurudwara, Mississauga, near Toronto-

(b) The matter was taken up with the Canadian Government who have informed us that the Canadian recruit ment officer had attended the meeting under die mistaken impression that its purpose was to discuss carreer opportunities in the Canadian Armed Forces. It has been now decided that all future invitations for giving such talks will be examined in Ottawa before they can be accepted. The